AN

ANSWER

TO THE

Diſſenters Objections

Againſt the

COMMON PRAYERS,

And ſome other Parts of

Divine-Service

Preſcribed in the

LITURGIE

OF THE

CHURCH of *ENGLAND.*

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I Believe all Conſidering Perſons are by this time ſenſible what advantage the *Papiſts* make of the Separation of ſome *Proteſtants* from the *Church of England.* And the ill effects of it at preſent, and the worſe which we have reaſon to fear, are ſo very diſcernible, that it may now be hoped the Conſideration hereof will ſomething abate thoſe Prejudices of Diſſenters againſt us, which we think have hitherto hindred the prevailing of our Reaſons. Though Prejudice is hard to be remov'd, yet 'tis not impoſſible. Several Ingenuous Perſons of that Perſuaſion have been reſcu'd

from their Prejudices againſt our Communion, when the miſchief of theſe Diviſions was not ſo apparent as 'tis now. I truſt therefore, that at this time many more will, and I pray God that all of them may ſeriouſly and impartially look over the Grounds upon which they have kept up the Separation. For I am perſuaded that their Objections againſt our Communion are not of that Conſequence, as to Juſtifie their forſaking it; and that themſelves would diſcern it, if they would conſider our Anſwers with the ſame Meekneſs and Charity wherewith we offer them. I have with great pleaſure read ſome ſhort Diſcourſes lately Publiſht that tend to this purpoſe, the Good Spirit wherewith they are written ſeeming to be a very likely means of conveying the Argument with all its advantage into the Minds of thoſe that ſhall take the pains to read them. And though I think that which hath been ſaid already, is enough to ſatisfie Judicious Men; yet by the perſuaſion of ſome Friends, I have taken upon me to Anſwer thoſe Particular Objections againſt the Publick Service of God by the *Book of Common Prayer*, which the Diſſenters are ſaid to inſiſt moſt upon. I muſt confeſs that I have always thought the *Liturgie* of the *Church* of *England* to be ſuch a truly *Evangelical* Form of *Publick Worſhip*, that it would rather have invited *Proteſtants* to our Communion, than kept them from it. And I believe, if the Diſſenters would ſeriouſly read over that Sermon of Dr. *Beverege* concerning the *Excellency and Uſefulneſs of the Common Prayer*, they would go near to be of the ſame mind. And I hope many of them are ſo, excepting only as to thoſe Particulars wherein they are not ſo well ſatisfied: And therefore I ſhall endeavour through Gods aſſiſtance to lay ſome things together, of which People of ordinary Capacities may make a Judgment, and which may afford reaſonable ſatisfaction to thoſe that Doubt.

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It is by some pretended, That the *Confessions of Sin* in our Liturgie are *too General*, and that there are *many Particular Sins* which ought to have been *Distinctly* Confessed, of which there is no mention.

Now I desire those that are of this Mind to consider, that there is hardly any thing in Publick Worship which requires more Caution and Prudence in the ordering of it, than that Confession of Sin which is to be made by the *whole Congregation*: It may be too *Loose* and *General* on the one side, or it may be too *Particular* and *Distinct* on the other. And it is not so very easie to avoid both inconveniencies. The reason is, because it should be framed as all may in good earnest use it, notwithstanding the great Difference amongst those that are within the Communion of the Church; the Sins of some of them being more in *number*, and greater in *kind*, and more *heinously aggravated*, than the Sins of others.

There may be this Inconvenience in a Confession *very short* and *General*, that takes in all, that it does not so well *serve* to excite or to express that due sense of Sin, nor to exercise that humility and self abasement wherewith we should always Confess our Sins to God. On the other hand, the Inconvenience of a *very Particular* and *Distinct* Confession of Sins will be this, That some Sins, with their Aggravations, may be Confessed in the Name of the whole Congregation, of which it is by no means to be supposed that all are guilty; and then they who through the Grace of God have been kept from them, cannot in good earnest make such Confession.

Now I take it, that the Confessions of Sin in the *Daily* and in the *Communion Service*, are so Judiciously framed as to avoid both extreams: Since the Expressions have that large meaning as to take in the case of the

the beſt of the Congregation, who may in good earneſt uſe them, and thereby joyn their Confeſſions with the reſt. And on the other ſide, though they are General, yet they are ſo affectionately amplified, that they may well ſerve to expreſs that Contrition which they ought to feel who labour under the Conſcience of moſt heinous Sins; and, if they come duly prepared, to excite a godly ſorrow for Sin, and to exerciſe a due ſenſe of their own unworthineſs of Gods Mercy. And I deſire thoſe who are made to believe otherwiſe, that they would venture to uſe their own Judgment in this matter, and upon this occaſion ſeriouſly to read over thoſe two Confeſſions in our *Lyturgie*; the one, that which our daily Worſhip almoſt begins with; the other, in the *Communion Office* before the *Abſolution*. And then let them judge impartially, as in the fear of God, if I have not ſaid the Truth.

But beſides this, the Confeſſion of Sin after the Miniſter has recited each of the *Ten Commandments*, is not only General enough to take in all ſorts of Men; but it ſeems alſo to be as particular as can reaſonably be deſired in a Congregation, becauſe it goes particularly through the Ten Commandments, to which it has been uſual to reduce the whole Duty of Man. And this Method of Confeſſion makes it eaſie for all that conſider their own ways, and endeavour to underſtand their own ſtate, to confeſs every one of them to God, yet more particularly, his known Offences in thought, word, or deed, againſt each Commandment.

Theſe things being well provided for, to find fault with this part of our Service, ſeems to argue want of Modeſty or Judgment in thoſe that do ſo. They ſeem to believe ours to be amiſs, becauſe they believe themſelves could make a better. But, if for this and ſuch like reaſons, they think fit to break Communion with us,

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where will be an end of *Diviſion* and *Separation*? I hope none of our Brethren will ſay, that they are not to make a Confeſſion of their Sins in a way of expreſſion that is poſſible to be mended; leſt by this means they ſhould never make any Confeſſion of Sin at all: Since it may ſtill remain a Queſtion, Whether *this* had not been better left out, or *that* added, after the beſt care is taken. If a Form of Confeſſion of Sins were Compoſed by the wiſeſt of them, I ſuppoſe he would pretend no more than that it is ſo Compoſed, that Gods People might ſafely and profitably uſe it. And this is that we may confidently ſay of the Confeſſions in our *Liturgie*; and if this be truly ſaid, it ought to end the Diſpute.

And yet they who Object the Generalneſs of our Confeſſions againſt us, would not find it an eaſie task to give us better and more unexceptionable. I may ſafely ſay, they would not mend the Matter, if they could prevail to have them as Particular as they are wont to be in the Prayers of ſome that ſeparate from us. For beſides that they Confeſs againſt themſelves ſo many particular Sins as many ſincere Chriſtians cannot in good earneſt acknowledge themſelves to be, or ever to have been guilty of, there is this other great inconvenience in ſuch Confeſſions, that groſs *Hypocrites*, and other *Carnal Profeſſors*, are very apt to go away with an opinion, that their caſe is as good as that of the beſt; ſince by theſe Confeſſions of Sin, which deſcribe their own caſe perhaps truly enough, it ſhould ſeem that the reſt are no better than themſelves. We find it needful to warn thoſe of our own Communion againſt ſuch like miſtakes, though they are not in ſo much danger of falling into them. We are afraid leſt they that live in the Practice of wilful Sins, ſhould think the better of themſelves, becauſe we do all confeſs that we have

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erred and ſtrayed from Gods ways like loſt ſheep, and have followed too much the devices and deſires of our own hearts, and have offended againſt the holy Laws of God, *and have left undone thoſe things which we ought to have done, and have done thoſe things which we ought not to have done, and that manifold ſins and wickedneſs in thought, word, and deed, have moſt grievouſly been committed by us, againſt the Divine Majeſty, whereby we have provoked moſt juſtly his wrath and indignation againſt us.* But 'tis not hard for us to ſhew theſe Men, that all this may be truly Confeſſed by the ſincere and godly, as well as by Hypocrites; that though the Confeſſion does not mention a difference, yet it does not imply that there is no difference between them, but after all, that theſe are in a ſtate of Impenitence & Damnation, while thoſe are in a ſtate of Salvation, who yet truely confeſs their Sins in the ſame General Words with the reſt of the Congregation. But there is greater danger of this ſelf-flattery we are ſpeaking of, where the Common Confeſſion of Sins is ſo very particular as ſome would have ours to be. And though there is *greater need* of Caution againſt it in ſuch places, yet the way of their Confeſſion makes the miſtake *more difficult* to be prevented.

Indeed we find in the Scripture Examples of Holy Men confeſſing ſuch Sins as themſelves were not guilty of. Thus did *Jeremiah*, *Nehemiah*, *Ezra*, &c. But this was upon Solemn Humiliation for thoſe known and publick Idolatries of the Nation, which had brought Gods heavy Judgments upon them, or for Common and Scandalous Tranſgreſſions afterward. They conſidered themſelves as part of that Community which had provoked God to ſend them into Captivity, and therefore they bore their part in the Common Calamity with ſuch meekneſs, and confeſſed the Common Sins with

with such humility, as if themselves had offended as greatly in their own Persons as their Countrey-men had done. But I conceive there is a great deal of difference between those Confessions of Sin, that such extraordinary occasions of Publick Humiliation require, and those that are fit for the ordinary Service of God in the constant and stated Assemblies of the Church.

But it ought not to be forgot, that those particular Confessions of Sin, which some Men want in our Liturgie are not properly the matter of that Publick Service we are to offer daily unto God in *Religious Assemblies*, but of that Private Devotion which is necessary to be performed in our Closets. And if we could be perswaded seriously to enter upon this Work of Examining our selves impartially concerning those Sins which we have more openly or secretly committed, and then to humble our selves before God for them, with particular Confessions and suitable Prayer for his Grace and Pardon; we should then find our Affections prepared to comply with those more *General* Confessions of Sin, which we make with the whole Congregation; we should then have less reason to complain, that those Confessions are not apt to move us, because this way would cure the *deadness* of *our hearts*, which commonly are most to blame, when we find fault with the means that God hath provided for us.

To conclude this Matter, There is great need of *Particular* Confession of Sins in *Religious Assemblies*, but that of another sort than what I have yet been speaking of; and that is the particular and humble Confession which every *Scandalous* Sinner ought to make in the *Congregation*, for the satisfaction of the Church, and the declaration of a true Repentance. This is not properly an Act of *Worship*, but of *Discipline*, but alas! almost lost in this miserably divided state of the *Church*;

a loſs never enough to be lamented! For ſo it has fallen out, that by quarreling for a Reformation in things of an Indifferent Nature, that ought to be left to the Prudence of Governours; and the Communion of *Chriſtians* is broken, and the Spiritual Authority which *Chriſt* left in his *Church* is expoſed to Contempt, which is a Matter of a thouſand times more concern, then all the Objections againſt the Book of *Common Prayer* put together, though they were as conſiderable as our Adverſaries ſeem to believe they are.

The ſecond Objection I ſhall take notice of, is that againſt the *ſhortneſs of the Collects*, by reaſon of which it is pretended, that the Prayer is *often ſuddenly broken off*, and *then begun again*: And this is thought not ſo agreeable to the *Gravity wherewith this Duty ought to be performed*, nor ſo likely a means of *exciting Reverence* and Devotion in the People, as *one continued Form of Prayer* that might be as long as all thoſe put together. Now in anſwer to this, I ſay,

1. That the meer *ſhortneſs* of a Prayer, is not to be found fault with by any underſtanding *Chriſtian*; ſince this would be to diſparage that *Form* of Prayer which our *Lord* taught his Diſciples, it being not much longer than moſt of our *Collects*, and not ſo long as ſome of them.

2. That it will be hard to prove, That *many* of theſe ſhort Prayers being offer'd up unto God one *immediately* after another, is either not ſo *Grave* or not ſo *Edifying*, as one *Continued Form*. I do not believe the difference to be ſo great, as it is made by thoſe that do not approve our way. For the *Work of Praying* is as much continued all the while, as if there were but one Continued Form. Indeed, in the Book the *Printed* Prayer breaks off ſomewhat often, and there is a *diſtinction* made between the ſeveral *Collects*, by a New *Title* ſhewing the Matter of

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the Prayer, and by beginning a New Line. But I hope our Brethren do not mean, that in this there is a defect of Gravity, or any hindrance of Devotion and Edification. For the *abruption* of the *Printed* Forms is by no means an interruption of our Prayer; ſince we ſtill go on in Praying or in giving Thanks to God, and without breaking off, paſs from one Petition, or Matter of Invocation, to another, as immediately as if the Diſtinct Forms we uſe together were all brought into the Compaſs of One.

And as there is no Interruption of *our Praying*, cauſed by the frequent beginning and ending of the *Collects*; ſo neither can this cauſe an Interruption of *Attention* in the People, which is rather helped by that frequency of ſaying *Amen*, which this way requires. Nor can it be charged with a tendency to Interrupt that *Devout Affection*, and *Godly Diſpoſition* of Mind, which is the beſt thing in Prayer: But on the other hand, this may be kept alive and more effectually ſecured, by calling upon the *Name* of *God*, and pleading the *Merits* of *Chriſt* ſo often as we do. I know ſome have ſaid, this is done more frequently than is meet. But it would be a lamentable thing, if there ſhould be any difference about this Matter. When the Decence and Convenience of a thing is conſidered, we ſhould attribute much to the Wiſdom of Authority, and to the Judgment of Prudent and Holy Men, ſuch as our firſt Reformers were, and great numbers of Learned Perſons ſince their time were alſo, who thought this manner of Praying to be Grave and Edifying. And I believe others would be of the ſame Mind, if they would not altogether dwell upon their Prejudice againſt our way; but attend a little to thoſe conſiderations that favour it, and which diſcover the advantage and uſefulneſs of it; which ſort of Equity they that are Wiſe and Humble will ſhew to all Men, much more to their Governours.

Now the Invocation of God somewhat often by his Attributes, does of it self tend to maintain in our Minds a reverent sense of his Majesty and Presence, which we all know is of necessary use to make us Pray unto him as we ought to do. I make no question but those that have been blamed for repeating *Lord, Lord*, so very often in their *Extempore* Prayers, would think themselves somewhat hardly used, if they should not be believed, in saying, that this was not for want of Matter, but for the exciting of a reverent sense of Gods Authority in themselves and others. And I think there is a little more reason why this Construction should be made of the frequent calling upon God by his Name and Perfections, in the Prayers of the Church.

In like manner the frequency of mentioning the *Merits* and *Mediation* of *Christ*, is profitable for the strengthening of our Faith and Assurance that we shall be heard. And to Pray unto God in the Name of Christ being the most distinguishing Character of our *Christian* Devotion, This also will justifie our frequent use of it. And the reason is so much the stronger, because this is one main thing that distinguisheth us from the *Church* of *Rome*, which pretendeth the Mediation of the *Virgin Mary*, and the *Angels*, and the *Departed Saints*, as well as of *Jesus Christ*. And it had not been so agreeable to the Principles of the Reformation, to have left the Name and Mediation of *Christ* out of the Conclusion of any of the Collects, when this Church declared her detestation of calling upon God in any other Name, but the Name of *Christ*. This is all I shall say to this Matter; and I hope enough is said to remove the Prejudice of all Sober and Understanding Persons against the *shortness* of the Collects, and against the recital of the Name or Attributes of *God*, and of the Name and Merits of *Christ* in every one of them.

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The next Exception I shall take notice of, is that against the *Repetition* of the *Lords Prayer* in the Offices of the Liturgie, and of that Hymn, *Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghoſt*, &c. and of that Petition, *Lord have mercy upon us*, and the like.

Now I hope that they are but very few, and I heartily wish they were none at all, that so little understand the *Chriſtian Religion*, as to disapprove all use of these Forms in our Worship: I do not mean of the *Lords Prayer* only, but of those Affectionate Petitions, *Lord have mercy upon us*, *Chriſt have mercy upon us*, and of that excellent *Doxologie*, *Glory be to the Father*, &c. which moreover contains a short Confession of our Faith, in opposition to the *Arians* and *Socinians*. But that which is thought too much, is that these things are too often repeated, and that regard enough is not had to that Rule of our Saviour, *When ye Pray use not vain Repetitions*.

But I hope nothing of this will appear upon farther Examination. For by our Saviour's Caution against *Vain* Repetitions, it seems that there are some Repetitions which are *not vain*, and which therefore he doth not forbid. And this we must necessarily suppose, because himself Praying in his *Agony*, *thrice* used the same Petition, and that in the *same* Words. Now the Vanity of this kind among the *Heathens* which our Saviour would have his Disciples to avoid, seems to be that Repetition which proceeds from the Affectation of much speaking in Prayer, or from a belief that God will not be moved to help us, unless we use many Words, or repeat the same thing over in a tedious manner. And thus the Prophets of *Baal* cried out from Morning till Noon, *O Baal hear us*, *O Baal hear us*. We are far enough, I hope, from such kind of Repetitions. And since they are such tedious Repetitions as these, which our Saviour

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here calls Vain, Men ſhould have a care of calling thoſe Repetitions of Good Prayers and Praiſes Vain, which are nothing like theſe, eſpecially in contempt of a Publick Rule.

I never yet could find, that thoſe who charge our *Liturgie* with this fault, have attempted to ſhew us thoſe marks of difference, by which we might diſtinguiſh Vain Repetitions from thoſe that are not Vain, which I think their pretence obliged them to do. But although the Gravity and Uſefulneſs of that part of our Service, which they make this Objection againſt, might well excuſe us from any farther Vindication; yet I ſhall ſay ſomething to this purpoſe, for the ſatisfaction of thoſe that are willing to be ſatisfied.

I conceive there are theſe two things only to be regarded in uſing Repetitions in Prayer or Thankſgiving, that they may not be liable to the charge of Vanity.

1. *That the Matter Repeated be very weighty and conſiderable*, and *that it be ſingularly apt to move thoſe Pious Affections* which God is moſt pleaſed with in our Addreſſes to him. And in this reſpect I dare ſay there is no ſober Chriſtian but will grant our Repetitions to be ſecured from Vanity. Such Petitions as *Lord have mercy upon us*, deſerve the putting forth of the whole ſtrength of our Deſires and Affections. And when we aſcribe *Glory to the Holy Trinity*, we expreſs what we ought to make the end of all our Worſhip, and of all the Actions of our Lives. And therefore theſe things will bear being Repeated, and the Repetition of them may be profitable both to excite and to expreſs the fervour of our Minds. And I truſt we ſhall agree, that if any one Form of Prayer will bear being uſed more than once, when we Worſhip God, it is the *Lords Prayer*.

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2. The ſecond thing required to ſecure Repetitions from Vanity, is, That they be *framed with Judgment, both with regard to the frequency, that they do not come over too often, and with regard to the diſpoſal of them*, that they come in *fitly* and in *due place*. I do not mean that this is ſo very nice a thing, that the difference of an hairs breadth, as we uſe to ſay, will ſpoil all: For in things of this Nature there is a Latitude in which Prudent Men may take their choice; but only that this is to be done with diſcretion and choice, and with reſpect to the Ends for which Repetitions may be uſeful. And I am perſuaded that this alſo is not wanting in our *Liturgie*. For I do not find that this was ever Objected againſt the Repetitions we mean, that they are ordered injudiciouſly, unleſs upon the only account of too much frequency. And yet the *Lords Prayer* is but twice in the Ordinary Service, and but once in every other diſtinct Office of Prayer or Thankſgiving. The *Gloria Patri* is uſed but once at our beginning to Praiſe God with Spiritual *Hymns*, and once at the Concluſion of every Pſalm, and of ſome of the *Hymns*, beſides one recital thereof in the Litany, when that is uſed. And as for thoſe ſhort Ejaculations. *Lord have mercy upon us; Chriſt have mercy upon us.* The former is repeated but once in the Ordinary Service, and both but twice in the Litany. So that there is no ſuch ground of Complaint as is pretended, that there are many Repetitions in our Form of Worſhip, much leſs that thoſe are Vain which are there. And I do not ſee how they that charge our Common-Prayer Book with Vain Repetitions upon theſe accounts, can have a reverent eſteem of the 136 *Pſalm*, where for 26 Verſes together, *His mercy endureth for ever*, is repeated in every Verſe.

There is indeed one thing more requiſite to ſecure our Repetitions of the ſame thing in calling upon God

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from being Vain, and that is, That our Desires and Affections should be raised to keep pace with our Expressions. But this belongs to us to take care of. And if we would endeavour to stir up in our selves that Zeal and Devotion of Heart, which should answer that Appearance thereof which these Repetitions make, this would satisfie us beyond all other Argument that they are not Vain. To Conclude this Matter, I desire those who do not yet approve our Repetition of the Lords Prayer, and the other short Devotions, to consider whether it be so easie to spend the time it takes up more profitably, than by joining in good earnest with the Congregation in these Prayers.

In the next place, the *Responsals* of the *Congregation* are Matter of Offence to some Persons; They do not approve the *Peoples saying the Confession and the Lords Prayer after the Minister*, nor *their alternate Reciting some Petitions in the daily Service*, with the *Psalms and Hymns*, and least of all do they approve *that part* which the *Congregation bears in the Prayers of the Litany*.

Now it were well, if they, who blame our Prayers upon this account, would consider what has often been said to shew the usefulness of this way. Namely, That it is apt to *check a wandring Spirit*, and to *help and relieve Attention*; and withal, that it tends to *quicken a lively Forwardness and Zeal in Gods Service*, whilst we *invite and provoke one another* to Pray and to give Thanks. These things we say not without some experience of their Truth, and we think they carry plain Reason along with them, and I do not find that they have been Contradicted by the Leaders of the Dissenting Party. It is True, they have declared their dislike of this way, but still without taking notice of what may be said for it. If I have observed right, the main Reason of their dislike is this, That the *Minister*, as they say,

ſay, *is appointed for the people in all Publick Services appertaining to God*, and that the *Scripture* makes the *Miniſter to be the Mouth of the People to God in Prayer*. And therefore I ſhall Examine this Reaſon in the firſt place.

And, 1. If it were granted that the Scripture maketh the Miniſter to be the Mouth of the People to God in Publick Worſhip; yet this muſt by no means be ſo Interpreted, as to make all Vocal Prayer and Thankſgiving in Religious Aſſemblies unlawful to the People. For then they muſt not declare their Aſſent to the Prayers which the Miniſter utters, by ſaying *Amen*, which yet the Scripture approves, and is not diſapproved by any of thoſe that Object our way againſt us. Nor muſt it be ſo taken, as if the People were to be excluded from a Vocal Part in Praiſing God by *Hymns* and *Spiritual Songs*. For this alſo is warranted by Scripture, and ſeems to be confeſſed by our Diſſenting Brethren, who allow the People to *Sing Pſalms* with the Miniſter.

Now he that audibly ſays *Amen* to the Prayers of the Congregation, makes a *ſhort Reſponſal* to the Miniſter: And moreover, they that ſing *Pſalms*, in which there are Paſſages of Prayer, Confeſſions, or Petitions, containing matter of Invocation proper for us, as the Pſalms often do, they pray Vocally. So that notwithſtanding what is pretended concerning the Miniſters being the Peoples Mouth to God, it ſhall ſtill be lawful for the People, ſometimes to joyn *Vocally* in *Prayer* as well as in Praiſe, and not only by ſaying *Amen*, but by expreſſing the very words of *Confeſſion* or *Petition*.

But, 2*ly*. Where is it ſaid in Scripture, that *the Miniſter is the Mouth of the People to God*, or that no Prayer may be Offered up to God *in Religious Aſſemblies*, o-

therwise than by the *Mouth of the Minister*? I doubt these sayings are grown so familiar amongst some People, that they believe them to be the Words, or very near the Words of Scripture: But there are no such *Words* nor *meaning* in the *Bible* that I can find, or that they have found for us. It is not good to pretend the Authority of Scripture for a Doctrine that is not to be met with there.

It is true that the Minister is the Mouth of the People to God in all those Prayers which he utters for them, and because these are many more than what the People themselves utter, he may be said to be their Mouth to God *Comparatively*, but not *Absolutely*. It will be true also, that the Minister is *appointed for the People in all Publick Services appertaining to God*, if this be understood for the *most part*, or of *All* with little exception. Some Publick Services there are which are inclosed in *his Office*, and he is appointed for them in *behalf of the People*; that is, for *Administring the Sacrament*, *Absolving the Penitent*, and *Blessing the People*. And therefore Prayers that immediately concern these things are to be pronounced by him only. And as for the rest, the *Order* of the Church, and the *Authority* and *Dignity* of the Ministerial Function, makes it fit and decent that the Minister should utter *most* ever of them, & that in those wherein the People have their part, he should ever *go before*, and *lead* them, and *guide* the whole performance: which is all taken care for in our *Liturgie*.

I said before, that the Dissenters do not utterly debar the People from all Vocal Prayer and Thanksgiving of their own in God's Solemn Worship. And therefore it were great pity that they should keep at a distance from us upon Questions of this Nature. And I heartily intreat them to consider whether they may not upon

their

their own Principles come up to the Rules and Customs of our Church in this thing.

1. If they grant the Peoples interest in Vocal Praise, let them consider whether they have reason to Condemn the Peoples bearing a part in any of the *Hymns* and *Psalms* by *alternate Responses*. For the plain End of reciting those Psalms in the Congregation, is to Praise and Magnifie God's Name, and to excite in our Hearts such like devout affections in doing so, as those Holy Men felt in themselves, who were assisted by God's Spirit in Composing them. And therefore the Dissenters are not obliged to demand that the People be silent all this while. I have heard some of them say, that if these *Psalms* and *Hymns* were *Sung*, the Congregation might then challenge to put in their Voices with the Minister. But when they are *read*, as they generally are in our Parish Churches, they say this ought to be the Work of the Minister only. But I cannot see why singing or not singing should make such a Difference. I grant it were better if they were every where sung, because this is more suitable to the Design of *Psalms*, than bare *reciting* is. But if they be not sung (which is customarily omitted in *Parish* Churches, for want of skill as I conceive) the next use of them that is most agreeable to their Nature and Design, is not that the Minister should *read all*, as he does other parts of the Scripture; but that the *People* should *recite* the *Psalms* and other Godly *Hymns*, with the Minister by way of *Answering in turns*, as the Custom is with us, more or less in most Places. For when the People rise up to do this in order to the Solemn Praising of God, this is much nearer to singing, wherein the People are allowed to bear a part in God's Vocal Praise, than the Ministers reciting all himself, and shutting out the People from any part thereof.

But it is Objected particularly against the reciting of *one* Verse of the *Psalms* by the Minister, and *another* by the People, that the Peoples Verse is in a manner lost to some of the Congregation, since in the *confused murmur of so many Voices nothing can be distinctly heard.*

Now if our Brethren should admit of what has been already said in Vindication of these Responsals; I hope this Objection will not be insisted upon. I grant, that which is uttered in the Congregation ought to be understood. But then those Verses of the *Psalms* which are uttered by the Congregation may be well enough understood by every one that has a Book, or who is acquainted competently well with the *Psalms* themselves. I need not say much in answer to this Objection, because it may be removed by every one that makes it, if he can read, and will bring a Book along with him. And as for those that cannot, I must needs say, that it is not so hard as is pretended for them also to take those Verses which are uttered by those that are near them, if they will carefully attend. And I have been credibly informed, that some devout People that *could never read*, have attained to an ability of reciting most of the Psalms without Book, by often hearing them in those Churches where they are *alternately recited*; which shews that the *Murmur* is not so *confused*, but that the Words may be heard distinctly enough to be understood, if one has a mind to it. And then they that cannot read may by this means be more quickned, than otherwise they would be, to learn to read; however to attend, and to learn the Psalms without Book, that they also may bear their part *Vocally* with the Congregation in God's Praises.

I shall add, That for the most part the *Psalms* are recited alternately in those Churches only, where it may be reasonably presumed that the whole Congregation

can

can read, very few excepted. For by the way, this Method of reading the Psalms is not Commanded, but every Parish Church is left at liberty to observe her own Custom about it. In the *Country* Parishes the Minister generally recites all, (which way I do not think so convenient as that of *Responsals*, for the Reason I gave before.) But there ought to be no breach amongst us about things of this Nature, in which one way may perhaps be more convenient in one respect, and the contrary more convenient in another; and then we should not altogether dwell upon Considerations that favour our own opinion, but attend also to those that may be offered for another, and put the best construction upon it, especially in favour of a Publick Rule, or a received Custom. This is more *Christian-like*, and will be more for the honour of Religion, and the good of other Mens Souls, and for our own Comfort at last, than to strain our utmost Wit to find faults with, and to aggravate Inconveniences against the Laws or Usages of the Church where we live. This that I am now speaking of is not a *Law* imposed on all the Churches of our National Communion, but a *Custom* of some of them, which I thought good to defend, that they who think not so highly well of it as I do, may not yet break Communion with those that use it. And I hope our Brethren, who grant the People are not to be excluded from Vocal Praise, will consider that there is no inconvenience in uttering the *Psalms* by *Responsals*; but that which is pretended concerning the difficulty to understand what is said: And that there is very little reason for this pretence, seeing the *Psalms* are the most *known* parts in the *Bible*, and that if those few who cannot read, will be careful, they may reap great benefit by attending to the Congregation, as some have done, till themselves have been able to recite the Psalms.

2. If they grant it Lawful and Expedient, that the People ſhould joyn in Vocal *Praiſe*; I cannot ſee how they can Diſpute the lawfulneſs or expedience of their joyning with the Miniſter ſometimes in Vocal *Prayer*. It will not be eaſie to ſhew a Reaſon why this ſhould be diſallowed, if that be allowed. If it be ſaid, there is ſome Example and Warrant in the Scripture for the one, but not for the other; it ſeems to be a good anſwer, that there is ſuch a parity of reaſon, as that the expreſs warrant of the Scripture for one, is an implied warrant for the other: Unleſs a Man will ſay, that *Nothing muſt be done in Gods Worſhip for which there is not expreſs and particular Warrant*; which though a Man may ſay when he is oppoſing a way of Worſhip which he likes not, yet he will not ſay it, when he comes to defend his own. It is a Principle that no Man will ſtand by, though ſometimes he may take it up to ſerve a turn. The truth is, the Scripture does not pretend to give us a perfect account of the Order and Manner of the Solemn Worſhip of God either in the *Synagogues* of the *Jews*, or in the *Churches of Chriſtians*; nor to preſcribe a Form for the Service of God by the Church in after times. Several things were done in the *Religious Aſſemblies of Chriſtians* firſt of all, that were peculiar to the extraordinary effuſion of the Spirit in thoſe times, and ſeveral that were fit enough for the conduct of God's Service when Miracles ſhould ceaſe; and of both ſorts *ſome* are intimated in St. *Paul's* two Epiſtles to the *Corinthians*; but no Man that underſtands theſe things will ſay, that they are all intimated there, or any where elſe in the *New Teſtament*. And therefore it does not follow that they did not obſerve in their Worſhip, this or that Cuſtom; from hence, that we do not find it written that they obſerved it. We do not read that the *Lords Prayer* was uſed in the time of the Apoſtles; but I ſuppoſe they are very

very few who will therefore make a question whether it was used or not. We are able to shew that the Peoples joyning in Vocal Prayer with the Minister was very anciently practised. In imitation of the way of the Christians, *Julian* the *Apostate* appointed a Form of Prayer for the *Heathen*, to be recited in Parts; which shews that this was a known Custom of the Church in those days, and that it had been generally practised before. And if this was the Primitive way, it is more probable that it was the way in the *Apostles time*, than that it was not. But of this let every one Judge as he sees cause. This is certain, That the Apostles left the Governours of the Church under the Obligation of ordering the Service of God according to General Rules, and prescribed that all things should be done Decently and in Order, and to Edification. And I do not think that our Brethren will ever be able to shew, that this Practice which they except against, is not agreeable to such General Rules, which yet they ought to do very fully and plainly, to excuse their Nonconformity.

That which is most urged, is, That the People speaking to God in the Church is *Disorderly*, and a breaking in upon the Ministers Office. But will they say that the *Children of Israel* intrenched upon the Priest, when they *all bowed themselves upon the Pavement, and Worshipped the Lord, and Praised him, saying, For he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever*? 2 *Chron.* 7. 3.? I have already observed, That Ecclesiastical Order is in this matter secured by the Ministers *Presiding* in God's Publick Worship, and *guiding* the whole performance of it.

But not to allow the People to make an *audible Confession of Sin* after the Minister, nor to *utter some few affectionate Petitions*, and those very short, to which they,

they are also *invited* and *led* by him; this rather seems to savour of an affectation of undue superiority over the People, than to proceed from any fear, lest by this means they should be *encouraged to invade the Ministerial Office*. I believe the *Laity* of our Communion have as Reverend an esteem of the Sacred Function as their Neighbours, and to raise the Comparison no higher, have shewn themselves ever since the Reformation as much afraid to usurp the *proper Offices* of the *Clergie*, as those that have been drawn away from the Communion of the Church, and have been taught that they must not say a word in Publick Prayer, but *Amen*. We should not think that we endanger our Order and the respect that is due to it, if we do not arrogate more to our selves than is meet. It has been one great fault of the Church of *Rome* to advance the *Priest* unreasonably above the *People* in the Administration of Holy Things. The Dissenting Ministers may be a little guilty of this, though in a particular wherein that Church is not guilty of it. They seem to make too little account of the *Flock of Christ*, in Condemning our Church for permitting and requiring the People to Offer up those Petitions to God with their *own Mouths*, which are appointed for them in the *Liturgie*. The Minister assuming the whole to himself does not indeed make *him much greater* in the Church than he is, but they that obstinately deny any part of it to the People, do make *them* of *much lower and meaner Condition* in the Church than they ought to be. And it is something strange, that those very Persons who Contend for the interest of the *Laity* in some business in *Religious Assemblies* that more nearly touches upon *Ecclesiastical Authority*, than the bare offering up of a few Petitions to God, should be so unwilling to allow them this. They affirm that the People have a right to be heard before

Bishops,

Biſhops, Presbyters and *Deacons* are *Ordained*, and as ſeveral of them contend to interpoſe alſo in all *Acts* of *Diſcipline*: and yet they do not think them qualified to bear any part in the Prayers of the Congregation, unleſs by ſaying *Amen* to what the Miniſter utters. Theſe things do not ſeem to hang well together. And I am perſuaded our Church has ordered this Matter with more Judgment and Impartiality, in aſſigning to the People their Intereſt both in Acts of *Worſhip* and *Diſcipline*, within ſuch Rules and Limits that the *Clergie* and *Laity* may know what their proper place and buſineſs is in all *Eccleſiaſtical Aſſemblies*.

I have heard ſome Object againſt the Peoples uttering Prayers and Praiſes in the Congregation, that it is *Forbidden Women to ſpeak in the Church*. But this is ſtrangely miſapplied to the Matter in hand. For it is plain, that the ſpeaking mentioned by the Apoſtle, ſignifies nothing but *Prophecying*, *Interpreting*, *Preaching*, or *Inſtructing*; and that the reaſon why he will not allow this to the Woman, is becauſe Preaching is an *Act* that implies *Authority*, whereas the Womans part is *Obedience* and *Subjection*. They that will read the whole Chapter, will find that this is the true meaning of St. *Paul*. And indeed the place it ſelf ſufficiently ſhews it, which I ſhall therefore ſet down. *Let your Women keep ſilence in the Churches, for it is not permitted unto them to ſpeak, but they are Commanded to be under Obedience, as alſo the Law ſaith. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their Husbands at home, for it is a ſhame for a Woman to ſpeak in the Church*, 1 *Cor.* 14.34,35, The Subject of this Diſcourſe is briefly expreſt in the 39 Verſe, *Brethren covet to prophecy, and forbid not to ſpeak with tongues*. Now the reaſon given why the Woman is not to ſpeak, *viz.* becauſe ſhe is to be *under Obedience*, does plainly reſtrain *that Speaking* to *Prophecying*, and

the like, which is moreover the only ſort of *Speaking* that is diſcourſed of in this place.

I know no particular Exception under this Head which remains to be ſpoken to, unleſs it be, that the People are ſaid to utter the *Words of Invocation in the Litany for the moſt part*, the Miniſter all the while *ſuggeſting the Matter of it to them*. But this Objection will be of no force, if what I have ſaid concerning the lawfulneſs of allowing the People an Intereſt in *Vocal Prayer* be admitted; unleſs the Objection be this, That they are allowed to bear *too conſiderable a part* in that Prayer, and ſomewhat to the diſparagement of the Miniſters Office. And then I anſwer, That, upon Reaſons which I ſhall preſently Offer, it ſeems to me to be otherwiſe. I ſhall only premiſe that I am really troubled for their ſakes who put us upon this Defence, that in Matters of Prudence and Expedience wherein there is a conſiderable latitude to order them well enough, that in theſe things I ſay they ſeem to yield ſo very little to the Authority and Judgment of their Governours. I do not think it hard to make out the Prudence of theſe Determinations ſo much diſliked: This is not the thing I am troubled at. But I think it hard that a *Publick Rule* ſhould not be thought reaſon enough to juſtifie things of this ſort, and to oblige the People to compliance without more adoe. I am ſorry that our Diſſenting Brethren do not conſider that it is ſome diminution to their Modeſty and Humility, to challenge, as in effect they do, a nice and punctual account of the prudence of the Publick Orders of this Church, before they will Submit to 'em in Practice. Now as to the Objection before us. The Peoples Vocal Part in the Litany ſeems to be no diſparagement at all to the Miniſters Office upon theſe accounts.

1. Although

1. Although the Formal Words, of *Good Lord deliver us*, and *We beſeech thee to hear us Good Lord*, be uttered by the People; yet it muſt be acknowledged that this is but *part* of the Prayer of the Litany, that which the Miniſter utters being the *other part* and the *far greater* part.

2. That the Words of *Prayer* are *begun* by the Miniſter, not only in the Invocation of the Holy Trinity firſt of all; but in that Prayer *Remember not Lord our Offences*, and *Spare us Good Lord*, and *We beſeech thee O Lord God*, &c. So that the Miniſter does utter the *Formal* Words of Prayer, and the People take them all afterward from him, excepting only the Words of that Petition, *Good Lord deliver us.*

3. They are but theſe two ſhort and known Petitions, *Good Lord deliver us*, and *We beſeech thee to hear us Good Lord*, upon the uttering of which by the People the weight of the Objection lies. And if they will allow the People any Vocal part in the Words of Prayer, I know not what Petitions are more proper for them than ſuch as theſe. As for the *Repetition* of them, there is this reaſon for it, that there is ſtill new and diſtinct Matter to which they are applied. And I will be bold to ſay, that the repeated application of them is a great relief to attention and minding the buſineſs we are about, and evidently contributes to keep up an affectionate and ardent frame of Heart, in deſiring thoſe weighty things we ask of God in this Prayer. I could almoſt appeal to the keeneſt of our Adverſaries, if that Petition, *Good Lord deliver us*, were applied but once in groſs to the *Deprecations* and *Supplications* of that part of the *Litany* to which it belongs, whether we ſhould not be more apt to let our attention fall, and to forget the meaning, and to languiſh in the offering up of thoſe Prayers, than as it is now ordered. But,

4. I think it is plain, that in offering up these Prayers to God, the Minister has the *Principal* and *Guiding* part, in that he utters all the *distinct Matter* of the Prayer, which the People do not, whereas he utters Words of *Invocation* as well as they. And now I desire our Brethren to consider, whether if the People were to utter that which is the Ministers part now; and the Minister to say that only which is theirs, they would not have more grievously complained that the Ministers Authority was slighted in the whole design, since he seemed only to learn from the People what the Congregation was to pray for.

It is of great Consequence with what Mind we come to consider any thing; if with prejudice and dislike, we are then ready to turn all that is reasonably produced in favour for it, into an argument of distaste; and that seems unreasonable, with the quite contrary, to which we should have been more displeas'd if this had been instead of the other. But surely we may judge of these things with *Impartiality*, and if need be with *Candor*, as we ought to do. And if the difficulty of doing so be seen in the frequency of doing the Contrary, even amongst Men otherwise good, we have the greater need to intreat of God to enlighten our Understandings, and to rescue us from prejudices and passions in the Judgment we make of all things of this nature. I do not intimate this any way in affectation of seeming not to need this exhortation my self; but remembring my own frailty, I do hereupon admonish my self as well as others. In the mean time, if there be any Bias upon my Judgment in that esteem, I declare my self to have of the Prayers of the Church; I must confess that I believe my self to be byas'd on the right hand. For I take it to be much more for the *safety of my own Soul*, as well as the *security of the Churches Peace*, that I should be inclined rather

rather to Judge too favourably of Publick Rules, than to value them beneath their just worth and usefulness. But I must confess, That of all the Prayers in our *Liturgie* that are of Humane Composition, I should be most unwilling to part with the *Litany* as it now stands there. It seems to be, what it was designed to be, a Form of Prayer apt to excite our most *intense* and *fervent* desires of God's Grace and Mercy. Whilest the Minister leads the people to pray against those several Sins and Evils which a *Christian* is most concerned to be afraid of, and at the end of every convenient period, the Congregation with one voice cries out, *Good Lord deliver us*; while the Minister leads them to pray for all those particular Blessings which ought to be most dear to a *Christian*, and the whole Congregation with one voice cries out, *We beseech thee to hear us Good Lord.* These Prayers seem to be offered with such affection, as I am not well able to express by any ordinary instance: In Offering them we seem to be as passionately concerned as a Malefactor upon his knees, that begs his own life. The whole Office is framed with respect both to matter and contrivance, for the raising of the utmost Devotion of good Christians, and for the warming of the coldest hearts by the heat of the Congregation. And in such a disposition it is then most fit to express our Charity, by praying for others, even all sorts of Men, as distinctly and particularly as Publick Prayers will bear. And this the fulness of this Prayer doth admirably provide for, as no Man will deny, who considers it without aversion and prejudice against it, which I pray God deliver all well meaning people from, that they may not deprive themselves of so great a benefit.

I shall say no more concerning this Matter of the peoples joyning in Vocal Prayer and Praise. And indeed the Reason why I have dwelt so long upon an Answer

to

to this Objection, is, becauſe I have obſerved, that ſome *honeſt* perſons are very confident, that in this thing at leaſt our *Liturgie* is to be blamed. And I hope what hath been ſaid will to ſuch perſons give reaſonable ſatisfaction, that for this thing it is rather to be commended. But becauſe upon this occaſion the part of the Congregation in the *Litany* was laſt mentioned: I ſhall now ſpeak briefly to ſome other Objections againſt the Litany which are commonly made.

The firſt of theſe is, That we pray to be *delivered from all deadly ſin*, which ſeems to imply that there are ſome Sins which are not deadly.

Now in anſwer to this it is by ſome truly enough ſaid, That theſe Words do not neceſſarily imply a diſtinction between Sins that *are*, and Sins that *are not deadly*. But admitting that ſuch a diſtinction was intended, yet I think no underſtanding *Chriſtian* has reaſon to be offended with it. By *Deadly Sin* a *Proteſtant* means all ſuch Sin as puts a Man out of a ſtate of Favour with God. But all Sins are not thus Deadly. *For in many things we offend all*, and as for thoſe Sins which the Regenerate commit through Humane Frailty only, they are not thereby put into a ſtate of Damnation. And though all Sin be in its own Nature Deadly or Damnable; yet through the Mercy of God, and the Merits of Chriſt, Sins of meer Infirmity are not imputed to true Believers, and therefore not Deadly to them. But there are ſome Sins ſo heinous, that he who Commits them is thereby put into a Damnable ſtate, and till he recovers himſelf by true Repentance and Actual Reformation, he cannot upon any good ground promiſe to himſelf that the *wrath of God does not abide upon him*. And 'tis of ſuch Sins as theſe that this paſſage is to be underſtood, as appears by Deadly Sin being added to *Fornication*. *From Fornication and all other Deadly Sin, Good Lord deliver*

liver us. So that this Petition ſeems to be of the ſame Nature with that of the *Pſalmiſt. Keep back thy Servant alſo from preſumptuous ſins, let not them have dominion over me, then ſhall I be upright, and I ſhall be innocent from the great Tranſgreſſion, Pſal.*19.13. Whereas therefore theſe Words of the *Litany* ſeem to ſuppoſe that ſome Sins are not Deadly, we ſhould be very unjuſt to make ſuch a Conſtruction of them, as if they implyed that ſome Sins are *in their own nature Venial*, and ſo ſlight, that they will be forgiven without any conſideration; for as I have ſhewn, we may hold that diſtinction which the Words ſuppoſe, and yet retain that *Proteſtant* Doctrine, that no Sin is forgiven, but through the *Mercy of God*, and the *Merits and Mediation of Chriſt.*

Again, ſome are offended with our praying againſt *Sudden Death.*

But why ſhould we not by Sudden Death underſtand our being taken out of this World when we are not fit to die? For ſometimes a thing is ſaid to be Sudden to us when we are not prepared for it. And in this ſenſe can any good *Chriſtian* find fault with the Petition? But ſuppoſe, that by *Sudden Death* we mean what is commonly underſtood by it, that is, a Death of which a Man has not the leaſt warning by Sickneſs: Are there not reaſons why even good Men may deſire not to die ſuddenly? May they not when they find themſelves drawing towards their end, by their good Inſtructions and Admonitions make impreſſion upon their Friends, Companions, and Relations to the bettering of them? May not their Counſels be more effectual with them than ever they were before? And is it not reaſonable to believe they will be ſo? As for themſelves, may not the warning they have of Approaching Death be improved to make them more fit to die than they were in their

their perfect health? In a Word, he that thinks himself to have ſufficiently *perfected holineſs in the fear of God*, and not to ſtand in need of thoſe Acts of Self-Examination, Humiliation, and Devotion, by which good Men improve the warnings of Death, which Mortal Sickneſs or Extream Age gives them, let him ſuſpend his Act, and refuſe to joyn with us when we pray God to *deliver us from Sudden Death.*

There is yet another Objection which I ſhould not have named, but that ſome of the Diſſenters, who ſeem to underſtand very little of Religion by making it, have it often in their Mouths. That is, when we pray to be *delivered by the Myſtery of Chriſts Holy Incarnation*, &c. *by his Agony and Bloody Sweat, by his Croſs and Paſſion*, &c. *and by the coming of the Holy Ghoſt*: They ſay, ſome of them, that this is *Swearing*, ſome that it is *Conjuring*, and I know not what. For which ſayings, ſavouring of great profaneneſs, they ought to be ſeverely rebuked; and that is all the anſwer they ſhould have, were it not that ſome of them may be groſly ignorant of the true Senſe of theſe Petitions.

And therefore I ſay, that they might eaſily ſuppoſe, if they would give their Minds to it, that we pray to be delivered through the Saving Efficacy of *Chriſts Incarnation and Paſſion*, &c. And yet I do not take this to be the principal meaning, or that which was intended. For I conceive that to be this, that when we ſay, *By the Myſtery of thy Holy Incarnation*, and *by thy Croſs and Paſſion*, &c. *Good Lord deliver us*; we implore Chriſt, who has already ſhewed ſuch ineſtimable goodneſs towards us, by taking our Nature to his Divinity, to *Die upon the Croſs*, to be *Buryed*, to *Riſe again*, to *aſcend into Heaven*, and there to *intercede with the Father for us*, and by *ſending the Holy Ghoſt* to qualifie the Apoſtles for their great Work of carrying the Word

of

of Salvation into the World: I ſay we implore him who hath already done ſuch mighty things for our Salvation, and we plead with him by that goodneſs which he hath already given us ſuch great demonſtrations of, by thoſe wonders of Mercy that he hath wrought for us, that he would now go on to deliver us by his powerful Grace from theſe Evils which we pray againſt. And this is ſo reaſonable, ſo devout and affectionate, ſo humble and thankful a way of Praying, that I am ſorry that any who call themſelves Believers ſhould be ſo ignorant as not to underſtand it, or ſo profane and unlike what they pretend to be, as to deride it. Though God does not need to be put in mind of his former benefits towards us; yet it is fit for us to mention them in our moſt earneſt Prayers, not only becauſe we are to make a grateful acknowledgment of them to him; but likewiſe, becauſe by this means we encourage our ſelves to ask in Faith; ſince he who unaskt hath done ſuch great things for us, will not fail upon our earneſt and humble prayer, which himſelf alſo hath required, to give us all other good things that we need, and to deliver us from all real evils of which we are in danger.

I proceed next to conſider whether there be any juſt cauſe to find fault with the reading of the *Apocryphal* Leſſons in our Church.

And, 1. It muſt be acknowledged by thoſe who allow the uſefulneſs of *Sermons* and *Catechiſing* in the Church, that thoſe Chapters may be read in the Church, though they are not Divinely inſpired Writings, ſince no ſober Man will pretend that the Miniſter *Preaches* or *Catechiſes* by *Inſpiration*. But if other good Inſtructions may be read or recited in the Church, beſides the Word of God it ſelf, why may not ſome Leſſons out of the *Apocryphal* Books be read, which contain excellent Rules of good Life; and Exhortations and Encouragements to

Virtue and Piety; especially since those writings were greatly esteemed by the Church in its purest Ages, when they and other Humane Writings were also Publickly read, as well as the Holy Scriptures?

2. If it be said that those Chapters of *Canonical* Scripture which are omitted in the *Calendar*, would be more profitably read instead of the *Apocryphal* Chapters; it ought also to be observed, that the Chapters omitted are those of the Old Testament, which either recite Genealogies, or the Rules of the Levitical Service, or which relate matters of Fact delivered also in other Chapters that are read, or which are hard to be understood. This seems to Apologise for the Churches leaving those to be considered at home by them that have ability so to do, and appointing some *Apocryphal* Chapters to be read, which are more plain, and in that respect more profitable for the Common People: Unless a Man will say, that because the Scripture is all of Divine Authority, it must be always more profitable to read any part of that to the people, than to use any other Exhortation, or read any other good Lesson. And then I do not know what place will be left for Sermons, since as I said before, they are no more of Divine Authority, than the Apocryphal Lessons.

3. If it be said, that the reading of these as Lessons, is a *prevailing Temptation* to the Vulgar to take them for God's Word, or to think them equal to the Writings of the Old and New Testament: I believe there is no sufficient ground for this. I never heard of any of our Communion that were led into that mistake. It is certain, that our Church declareth those Lessons to be no part of Canonical Scripture, and in the 6*th* Article saith, That they are *read for example of Life, and instruction of Manners, but that it doth not apply them to establish any Doctrine:* And herein she follows the Judgment and Practice

Practice of the Primitive Church, which distinguisheth between the *Canonical* and *Apocryphal* Books, esteeming those to be of Divine Authority, these not so, but indeed Godly Writings, profitable to be publickly read. And why the same use of them may not be retained with the same distinction, I can see no good Reason. For the Church of *Romes* receiving the *Apocryphal* Books into her *Canon*, is not likely to mislead any of our Communion; since we are not so forward to take their Opinion in any Matter of Religion.

But in the last place, There is no *Apocryphal* Lesson read in our Churches upon any *Lords day* in the year, and so there is not this pretence against Communion with us upon the *Lords days*, when it is that we do so earnestly desire the Communion of those that have separated from us. And therefore I shall at present say nothing to those Exceptions which are taken from the *Matter* of some of the *Apocryphal Books*, as that some Relations are pretended to be *Fabulous*, &c. For this would engage me to a greater length than I intend. But whoever thinks himself capable to judge of this Controversie, may receive satisfaction from what Dr. *Falkner* has said upon it in his *Libertas Ecclesiast.* p. 164, &c.

To proceed; Although the *Communion Service* for the Gravity and Holiness thereof is preferred by the Dissenters before all other Offices in the *Common-Prayer-Book*, yet that has not past free from Exception. The Passages that seem to be disliked are two.

1. That Petition in the Prayer before Consecration, *That our sinful Bodies may be made clean by his Body, and our Souls washed by his most precious Blood.* Here they say a distinct efficacy of cleansing, and a greater efficacy is attributed to the Blood of Christ, than to his Body; inasmuch as the cleansing of our Souls is attributed to the Blood of Christ, whereas our Bodies are said only to be cleansed by his Body.

Now in answer to this, I suppose it is plain from those Words at the delivery of the *Bread* and *Wine*; *The Body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for thee preserve thy Body and Soul unto everlasting life. And the Blood of our Lord*, &c. It is, I say, plain from hence, that our Church teaches the Sanctification and Salvation of our Souls and Bodies, to flow from the *Body* as well as the *Blood of Christ*. And therefore that former Passage is not to be Interpreted, as if our Souls were not cleansed by the *Body of Christ*, because they are said to be washed by his Blood. For the saying of this does not exclude the other. When the Apostle said, *We being many are one Bread and one Body, for we are all partakers of that one Bread*, 1 Cor. 10. 17. Though he expresst only the Bread of the *Eucharist*, yet no man will say he meant to exclude the *Cup*, as if the Unity of the Church would be argued only from their partaking in that one kind. And when he said, *that we have been all made to drink into one Spirit*, 1 Cor. 12. 13. he meant not to exclude the Participation of the *Bread*, as if that *one Spirit* which animated the Church, was signified only by partaking of the Cup. Nor will any Man argue from hence, that he attributes a distinct efficacy to the Bread to prove the Unity of the Body, and to the Cup to prove the Unity of the Spirit. I must needs say, that this Exception was sought, but never offered it self.

2. The Ministers delivering the Elements into every Communicants hands, with a Form of Words recited to every one of them at the Distribution, is blamed also, as being thought a departure from the Practice of Christ at the first Institution of this Sacrament. For they say, our Lord's Words were, *Take ye, Eat ye, Drink ye all of this*, and therefore the People are not to take the Elements one by one out of the Ministers hand, nor ought any Form of Words to be used particularly to every one that receives. To this I answer, 1. That

1. That it does not appear from those Words, *Take ye*, &c. which are spoken in the Plural Number, that our Saviour did not speak particularly to every one of his Apostles when they received, or that he did not deliver the Elements into every particular Mans hand. For the *Evangelists* may well be supposed to give a short account of the Institution of *Christ*, not of every Word he then said, but what was necessary to be related. And then what might be particularly said or done to every one, would be sufficiently related, in being related as spoken or done Generally to all. That is, if Christ had said, *Take thou, Eat thou*, to every one of them; this were truly related by the *Evangelists*, who tell us that he had said to all, *Take, Eat*, &c. And therefore I do not see how it can be proved, that our Practice varies from this *Circumstance* of the Institution: Tho, if it did, I suppose it might be as easily defended, as the Celebration of the Eucharist about Dinner time, and not at Supper, which the Dissenters themselves scruple not. But he that thinks not this Answer sufficient, let him consult the aforesaid excellent Book of Dr. *Falkner*, p. 218, &c. where he shall find, that it is indeed more probable that our way is agreeable to the way of the First Institution in this Matter, than that which the Dissenters would have instead of it. But for their sakes who may not have that Book by them, I shall add out of it, another answer which I think may satisfie a Reasonable Man. Supposing then that the *Evangelists* did not relate the Matter *Summarily*, but as distinctly as the Words were spoken by our Saviour. Yet,

2. "Our Saviour also Commanded his Disciples, *Mat.* "28. 19. to teach all Nations, Baptizing them in the "Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy "Ghost: But will any Christian think it hence deduci-"ble, That where divers Persons, or great numbers are to

"be

"be Baptized together, the Solemn Words of Baptizing "them *in the Name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy* "*Ghoſt*, may not lawfully be expreſſed ſeverally to every "Perſon? And if the Baptiſmal Form of Words may be "Solemnly and Suitably to that Sacrament applied to "every Perſon Baptized, by the General acknowledg-"ment of all Chriſtians, there can be no Reaſon why "the like may not be allowed in the Lord's Supper. "Wherefore the Practice of our Church herein is no way "*unſuitable to the Inſtitution of Chriſt*, or the Nature of "the Sacrament; and the Alteration of it would be for "the worſe, and to the abating the Solemnity of its Ad-"miniſtration, *Lib. Eccl. p.* 224.

There remains but two more particular Exceptions which I think needful to take notice of, and thoſe are in the Office of Baptiſm. And the firſt I mean, is,

1. That all Baptized Infants are ſuppoſed to be Regenerated; of which, as ſome ſay, we cannot be certain.

But I deſire thoſe that ſay ſo, to conſider if the *Scripture* does not attribute to Baptiſm, as much as the *Liturgie* does. We are ſaid by Baptiſm to be made Members of Chriſt's Body, *By one Spirit we are all Baptized into one Body*, 1 Cor. 12. 13. And *to be Baptized into Chriſt*, and *to put on Chriſt*, Gal. 3. 27. and *he that is in Chriſt is a new creature*. And to be *Baptized for the Remiſſion of ſins*, Acts 2. 38. Baptiſm is alſo called *the waſhing of Regeneration*, Tit. 3. 5. Now if it be made a Queſtion, Whether Infants are *Regenerated* in *Baptiſm*; the Queſtion at laſt muſt come to this: Whether they are Qualified to become *Members of Chriſts Body*, to be admitted into God's *Covenant*, to receive Pardon of *Original* Sin, and to become *New Creatures*, gaining that State by *Grace*, which they could not have by *Nature*? And I do not ſee, that any but *Anabaptiſts* can deny this. For they that contend, as we do, that Infants are capable of *Baptiſm*,

Baptiſm, muſt not deny them to be qualified for this *Grace* of Baptiſm, unleſs they will make the Ordinance and Promiſes of God to be of none effect towards them. Now if Infants do by *Baptiſm* gain *Remiſſion of Sin*, and are made *Members of Chriſt*; they are *Regenerated* and *Born anew*. If they do not gain this by it, what does their Baptiſm ſignifie? Or what benefit can they be ſuppoſed to have by it, if they die in their Infancy, more than if they had not been Baptiz'd at all? This is the only means of Salvation they can have. And thoſe expreſſions of the Scripture above recited, with many more, will juſtifie our Church, which ſuppoſes that this means will be effectual, ſo long as they are capable of none other, and therefore ought to be conſidered by thoſe that make it to be of none effect.

I ſhall only add, That this had been thought a ſtrange Queſtion in the Ancient Church, Whether Infants were *Regenerated by Baptiſm*, when the *Pelagians*, whoſe cauſe led them to deny it, yet durſt not do it directly, becauſe they knew it would not be endured; and therefore they confeſſed that Infants were to be Baptiz'd, to qualifie them for the *Kingdom of Heaven*, but not for the *Remiſſion of Sin*. So that they themſelves ſeemed to acknowledge the ſaving effect of Baptiſm to Infants; though as St. *Auſtin* often ſhewed them, they contradicted themſelves by ſo doing. But they durſt do no otherwiſe, becauſe the Doctrine of the Church was ſo plainly againſt them in this matter, and every Believer was ſo ſettled in it, that I remember St. *Auſtin* ſomewhere ſpeaks to this purpoſe, that the *Pelagians* would have come to the point, and denied that the Baptiſm of Infants ſignified any thing at all to their Salvation, and therefore might be as well let alone; but that they were afraid the Mothers themſelves of thoſe Children would every where reproach them for it.

The other Objection against the Office of *Baptism*, is this, That the *Godfathers* and *Godmothers*, that answer for Infants, are not their *Parents* or *Guardians*, but others, who have, they say, *no Authority* to *Covenant* or *Act in their Names*. In answer to which, I shall omit several things that might be said, and content my self with these two things, which I think may be sufficient.

1. That in all cases where the Sureties are procured by the *Parents*, there they have *Authority to Covenant* in behalf of the Infant; and this the Objectors must grant, I think, upon their own Principles: since they contend that *Parents* or *Pro-parents* are fittest to act in behalf of the *Baptized* Infants, as having Authority so to do, since they have the Power to dispose of their Education afterward. For then the Sureties which are by them prevailed with to stand for their Children, have at least all that Authority which the Parents can give them. And this is sufficiently known to be the case with us. And this is that which the Church might well suppose, *viz.* that the Sureties, which contract with the Church in the Infants Name, would be procured by the Parents; so that the Parents Contracting in behalf of the Infant, is included in the Undertaking of the Sureties; who although they are required by the Church to answer for the Infant, yet are they supposed to be *Authoriz'd* by its Parents also, so to do.

2. The good Design of this Order and Appointment in the Church ought to be considered, which is not the less, for the fault of Men, and the looseness of these times, does often defeat it. For hereby the Church taketh greater security, that the Infant shall be brought up in the Knowledge and Practice of that Holy Covenant into which it is Baptiz'd: In as much as besides the care of the Parents, which is in effect promised, and may be more reasonably rely'd upon without their own Solemn Act, upon the account

account of that *Natural Affection* which makes them particularly concerned; beſides this, I ſay, there is a *Particular Obligation* laid upon others alſo, to ſee that the Infant be ſo Educated, as much as in them lies. In caſe the *Parents ſhould die* before the Child is grown to years of Diſcretion, the Sureties are then more Particularly Obliged to look to their Godchild, that he be put into a way of learning and doing his Duty. If they *ſhould not die* before, but be *remiſs*, the Sureties have Authority to come to them and Admoniſh them of their Duty, and to let them know, that ſince themſelves were deſired by them to undertake for this Child, they as ſuch Sureties are particularly concerned to mind the Parents of their Duty, and if need be to *rebuke them ſharply* for neglecting it; ſince they did in effect, and to all purpoſe of Obligation undertake for the performance of it, when the Sureties undertook for the Child. Moreover when *the Child is grown to years of Knowledge*, and come abroad into the World, *he is liable to* the Charitable Admonitions of his Sureties as well as of his Parents, in caſe he does amiſs, and their Reproofs are more likely to take place, than thoſe of moſt other Perſons. Now though all *Chriſtians*, as *Members of one Body* are to take care of, and to watch over one another, yet ſome are more Particularly Obliged, and have greater Advantages to do thoſe Works of Spiritual Charity than others. And I appeal to all conſidering Men, if *Sureties at Baptiſm*, may not with great Authority, and with likelyhood of good effect, Reprove both thoſe *Negligent Parents* and *Unruly Children* for whom they have undertaken to the Church. The Parents for not minding to Educate their Children in the knowledge and keeping of the Baptiſmal Vow; or the Children for not hearkening to good Admonition. And in this Age when the Duty of Chriſtian Reproof is ſo generally omitted; it were well if the defect were this way a little ſupplied.

But it is by no means desireable that the opportunity thereof, and the obligation thereunto should be taken away. I know some will be apt to say, that this is but rarely Practised. But that is no sufficient Answer to what I have said. For when we use to judge of the goodness of a Rule or Custom by the good that comes of observing it, we must look where 'tis kept, though it be kept but by few, and not where 'tis broken. And if the Dissenters have nothing to say against the use of Sureties, but that the end of this Appointment is seldom regarded, themselves may help to remove this Objection, by returning to the Church, and encreasing the number of those that do pursue the End of it. And thus doing they shall have the benefit of this Order of the Church, and the Church the benefit of their good Examples.

As for the use of the *Interrogatories* put to the Sureties, and their *Answers*, they are a Solemn Declaration of what Baptism doth oblige all Baptiz'd Persons to, and that Infants do stand ingaged to perform the Vow of Baptism when they shall come to years of knowledge. This is the known meaning of the Contract, nor did I ever hear of any that otherwise understood it; and therefore I see not why it should be said to be *liable to misunderstanding*.

After all, there is one General Objection yet remaining which still prevails with some Persons, and that is, That some of our Prayers are to be found in the *Mass-Book*, and the *Breviary*, and the *Offices* of the Church of *Rome*. This Objection hath made a great noise, but I appeal to Understanding Men, if there be any sense in it.

No Man will say, that 'tis enough to make any Prayer, or Form of Devotion or Instruction unlawful to be used, that the same is to be found in the *Mass-Book*, &c. For then the *Lords Prayer*, the *Psalms*, and a great part of the Scriptures besides, and the *Creeds* must never be used by us. And therefore whether any part of the *Roman* Service

Service is to be uſed by us or not, muſt be judged of by ſome other Rule, that is by the Word of God. So that 'tis a vain Exception againſt any part of our Liturgie, to ſay it was *taken out of the Maſs-Book*, unleſs it could be ſhewn withal, that it is ſome part of the *Romiſh Superſtition*. I know it has been ſaid, that the Scriptures being of neceſſary uſe are to be retained by us, though the Church of *Rome* retains them; but that there is not the ſame Reaſon for Forms which are not neceſſary; but in thoſe we ought to go as far from that Church as ever we can. But what reaſon is there for this? For the Danger that may happen *to us* in coming too near them, lies in things wherein they do ill, not in which they do well. And as for the *Papiſts* themſelves, we do not in the leaſt countenance them wherein they are wrong, by agreeing with them wherein they are right. And as for the *Things* themſelves, they are not the worſe for being uſed by them. We ſhould allow the *Papiſts* a greater Power to do miſchief than they have, if their uſing of ſome good things ſhould render all uſe of them hurtful to us. The Caſe in ſhort is this, When our Reformers were intent upon the Reformation of the Liturgie, they deſigned to Purge it of all thoſe corrupt Additions, which the uſurpt Authority of the Church of *Rome* had long ſince brought into it; and to retain nothing but what was agreeable to the Holy Scriptures, and to the Practice of the purer Ages of the Church. And in this they did like Wiſe Men, becauſe thus it would be evident to all the World, that they Reformed upon juſt & neceſſary Reaſons, and not meerly out of a deſire of Change and Innovation; ſince they Purged the Forms of Divine Service, from nothing but Innovations and Corruptions, and an unprofitable croud of Ceremonies. No Man can ſhew a good Reaſon why thoſe Paſſages in the Common-Prayer-Book, which are to be found in the *Maſs-Book*, but which were uſed al-

ſo by the Church before *Romaniſm* had Corrupted it, are not as much to be Valued becauſe they were once uſed by good Chriſtians, as to be run down becauſe they have been ſince uſed by Superſtitious and Idolatrous Men. But to conclude this Matter, If any Man would ſet himſelf to expoſe the *Maſs-Book*, he would I ſuppoſe lay hold upon nothing but the Corruptions that are in it, and things that are obnoxious to juſt reproof; not on things that are juſtifiable and may eaſily be defended. And the reaſon of this is plain, becauſe the *Maſs-Book* is to blame for thoſe parts of it only, but not for *theſe*. Now for ſuch Paſſages as the *Maſs-Book* it ſelf is not to be blamed for, neither is our *Liturgie* to be blamed, if we will ſpeak juſtly of things, and without Prejudice and Paſſion.

I have now conſidered all thoſe Exceptions againſt the Solemn Service of God by our Liturgie, which the Diſſenters are thought to inſiſt moſt upon. Not but that ſome other Exceptions have been made by the Miniſters of that perſuaſion: But this I hope was without deſign to prejudice the People againſt our Communion, but rather to gain ſome alterations, which in their Judgment would have been advantageous to the Book of Common-Prayer, and given it a greater perfection; whether they were right in this or not, I will not now diſpute; being very deſirous, as I pray God we may all be, to avoid Controverſies in this Matter as much as may be. Nay, I believe thoſe Prejudices of the *Lay*-Diſſenters againſt the Common-Prayer, which I have endeavoured to remove, have wrought in them a greater averſion to it, than the beſt Divines of that way intended; (I ſhould be very ſorry to find my ſelf miſtaken in this.) And this conſideration was ſome encouragement to me to give a true account of thoſe things they ſeemed to diſlike moſt of all.

Which

Which I have endeavoured upon the plain grounds of *Reaſon* and *Scripture*, almoſt wholly avoiding appeals to other *Church Antiquity*, not but that great regard is to be had of it, and that we can defend our ſelves by it; but becauſe they are very few in Compariſon who are qualified to Examine this kind of Argument. And the like I ſay of the Concurrence of other Reformed Churches with us in thoſe things that are diſliked.

As for the Sign of the *Croſs in Baptiſm*, it is pretended that this is a *part of Worſhip*, or a *Sacrament of Mans making*. The contrary to which, has been ſo plainly ſhewn in late Diſcourſes, that unleſs I am called to give an account of it, I cannot think fit to trouble you with this Diſpute. But I heartily deſire our Brethren to conſider at length, that though the uſe of this Ceremony were not ſo eaſie to be defended as I think it is, yet that it is no Condition of Communion, becauſe the *People* are not required to Sign with the Sign of the Croſs, but the *Miniſter* only.

As for *Kneeling at the Communion* of the Holy Table, that is indeed every Communicants Act, but of this you may expect a Diſcourſe from another Hand, which I hope will give ſatisfaction to all Sober Perſons, that are yet unſatisfied about it.

And now I intreat all thoſe of the Diſſenting Party, into whoſe hands theſe Papers ſhall fall, that they would ſeriouſly conſider, whether it be fit to venture the *Guilt* of *Schiſm*, and the *ſad Conſequences* of it, likely to come to paſs, upon ſuch grounds as theſe: Let us at length conſult for the Honour of this Age with Poſterity, who will ſtand amazed to find a Separation of Proteſtants from this Church, carried on ſo long upon ſo little occaſion given, and ſuch weak Objections ſo ſtrongly inſiſted upon, as to build an oppoſite Communion upon them.

them. Let us Conſult the *Honour* and the *Safety* of the Reformation, and no longer ſuffer it to be expoſed to ſcorn and danger, to be Laught at, and Diſgraced by the *Papiſts*, our dangerous Enemies always, but never *more dangerous* than now. If the *Diſſenters* are not yet convinced, that the wide breach they have made in the Communion of *Proteſtants*, will certainly let in *Popery*, if it be not prevented by a timely cloſing with the *Church of England*: Nothing remains but to wait till they are convinced by the laſt Extremity. I can take no comfort in being aſſured that at laſt they will believe it, when, alas! it will be to no purpoſe to believe it. I beſeech them to conſider, whether we are likely to be united in any other Communion, but that of the *Church of England* as it is by *Law Eſtabliſhed*; and whether ſo little account ought to be made of Law and Authority, as to ſay that our Governours may as well come down to them, by forbearing to require what they diſlike; as they come up to the Law, by doing what it requires. Will our caſe bear this wantonneſs? Will ſuch Expreſſions conſiſt with our Duty? I beſeech them by what is moſt dear to them, by the Honour of God, and the Love of Chriſt, and the Care of their own Souls, and the Charity they have for the Souls of other Men, that they will take pains with themſelves to lay aſide Prejudice, and Anger, and all Paſſions that obſtruct a clear Judgment of things that have been diſputed amongſt us, and that they would conſider impartially what we have ſaid, as in the ſight of God who knoweth the Hearts of Men. Can they propound to themſelves more beneficial Deſigns, than to check the Prophaneneſs and Atheiſm which in this laſt Age hath been ſo much complained of, than to reſtore in ſome meaſure the Ancient Diſcipline of the Church for the excluding of vicious Men from the Communion of the

Faithful

Faithful, than to tranſmit the Profeſſion of the true Religion Eſtabliſht among us, down to their Poſterity? The moſt effectual means by which they can contribute to all thoſe good Ends, is to return heartily and unanimouſly to the Communion of the Church of *England*; all the true Sons whereof are ready to receive them with open Arms, with joy and thankfulneſs to God, and to them, for the good they will do us and themſelves by it. But as for them, that for Worldly and Corrupt Intereſts, encourage and ſupport the preſent Separation from this Church, I cannot expoſtulate with them in this manner, ſince ſuch Men have not the fear of God before them, and 'tis impoſſible they ſhould be touched with tenderneſs for the Concerns of Religion, while they continue as they are. All I ſhall ſay to them is, That when that great day of Judgment comes, which they of all Men have moſt reaſon to be afraid of, then all the diſmal Conſequences of this Schiſm which are likely to happen, will be fully required at their hands to be ſure; whilſt thoſe that in meer Ignorance and Miſtake have contributed to them, ſhall have an eaſier Account to give, eſpecially if they have taken pains to inform themſelves better.

What good Effect our Applications to Men will have, we cannot ſay; but if it ſhall appear that they are not yet prepared for Inſtruction; we have the more reaſon to turn our ſelves to God by earneſt Prayer, that he would pleaſe to open the Underſtandings of the ſimple, and to detect the ill Deſigns of diſhoneſt Men; and to enable us to bring forth more and better Fruits of Repentance, that whatever happens to this Church, *it may not be forſaken of his Favour and Protection*, Amen.

FINIS.